

were taken, whole communities were absolutely ravaged, and homes were destroyed. Even after seeing that level of destruction, not enough action has been taken to make sure that homes are resilient and safe from extreme weather events, especially those located in the hardest hit communities.

And just last year, in the middle of the pandemic, Georgia and Tennessee experienced deadly tornados that damaged and demolished more than 2,000 homes. In the wake of California's 2018 wildfires—the deadliest in the state's history—82 percent of homes that were built to pre-2008 standards were damaged. The need to ensure our homes and communities are sited and built more equitably and resiliently is more critical than ever before.

And so, I want to make it clear that America's housing infrastructure is vulnerable to the growing costs of climate change and weather disasters, which will only accelerate the need for maintenance and repair, or it will make our housing infrastructure uninhabitable. Between 2016 and 2020, these disasters have cost nearly \$616 billion in damages and have displaced tens of thousands of people from their homes. We cannot keep asking people to live like this. We must act now.

As Chairwoman of the House Committee on Financial Services, I recently introduced my historic Housing Is Infrastructure Act of 2021, which provides over \$600 billion to increase our nation's green, inclusive, affordable housing infrastructure. I'm fighting for the type of investments that will bring our housing stock into the 21st century and beyond, including working to address environmental racism and the climate emergency, strengthening our nation's commitment to fair housing, and recognizing that housing is infrastructure.

HONORING DIANE DILLON

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2021

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Diane Dillon as the recipient of the Napa County Farm Bureau's 2021 Friend of Agriculture for her ongoing work in serving Napa Valley's agricultural community.

As a fifth-generation Napa County resident, Diane has been an active community member for as long as she can remember. A UC Santa Barbara alumna, she graduated with a B.A. in Cultural Anthropology with Honors then continued her education at UCLA where she received her master's in library and information science. Diane went on to receive her J.D. from UC Davis in 1981 where she was a member of numerous school organizations. Since 2003, Diane has been serving on the Napa County Board of Supervisors as District 3 representative. As a Supervisor, Diane has made it a mission to better understand the intricacies of the state budget and finance system. To that end, she was asked to serve on the statewide Cities Counties Schools (CCS) Partnership 2009 Joint Task Force on Fiscal Reform. In January 2010, Diane held the first ever county-wide conference involving the county, municipalities, and school representatives.

Throughout her career, Diane has tirelessly worked with the agricultural community to un-

derstand and address the complex issues they face. As a co-organizer and member of "Get a Grip on Growth," she helped protect a 900+ acre piece of land from becoming developed into a commercial building area. Furthermore, Diane was co-chair on the "No on W & X Committee" where she received the Outstanding Service Award from United Napa Valley Associates for her resolute work. Diane is regarded as a passionate and dedicated member of the community and is recognized for her hard work to protect the scenic resources and beautiful lands of Napa County's agricultural industry. She is an excellent example of what it means to be a hard-working elected representative and a role model to many in leadership and the agricultural sector.

Madam Speaker, there is no doubt that Diane Dillon's achievements will leave a tremendous impact in our community for generations to come. Therefore, it is fitting and proper that we honor her here today.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF ROBERT "RENNY" CUSHING

HON. JAMIE RASKIN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2021

Mr. RASKIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Robert "Renny" Cushing, who has led a remarkable life dedicated to social activism and public service. His selfless determination to secure equitable social change for the communities he has served is a true testament to our country's civic spirit.

His journey began at the young age of 15 while advocating alongside civil rights activist Allard Lowenstein to end the Vietnam War and to lower the voting age nationwide. A year later, he left Hampton, New Hampshire with only \$40 in his pocket and an itch to see the world. Renny soon traveled thousands of miles and worked numerous blue-collar jobs. He picked oranges in Florida, plucked grapes in the San Joaquin Valley of California, collected waste in Atlanta and harvested tobacco in Mexico. After a few years of travelling, he decided to bring all the knowledge he acquired about people and life back home.

When he returned to Hampton, Renny co-founded the Clamshell Alliance, a group that would protest the construction of a nuclear station that individuals and families throughout his community voted against. He also later co-founded the Murder Victims' Families for Human Rights, an international non-government organization of family members of murder victims fearlessly dedicated to opposing the death penalty. Renny, whose father was tragically murdered, spent decades advocating for the abolishment of New Hampshire's death penalty law, which the state did repeal in 2019.

He officially began his career as a legislator in 1986, after winning his first election as a Representative of the New Hampshire State House. Following multiple non-consecutive terms, Renny was nominated as the Democratic Leader of the New Hampshire State House of Representatives in 2020. While serving as the Democratic Leader, Renny received a heartbreaking stage four prostate cancer diagnosis after he was hospitalized with acute kidney failure.

Renny did not allow this devastating news to deter his commitment to serving others. Now the Democratic Minority Leader, Renny continues to serve in the New Hampshire State House where he has fought to ensure remote access to House hearings for disabled legislators, expand availability of medical marijuana for cancer patients and ensure the removal of harmful PFAS chemicals in nearby wells.

Renny has devoted his life to the betterment of our nation and our communities and the uplifting of all our people. His unwavering commitment and tenacious attitude even in the toughest of times exemplify what it means to be a patriotic American.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to recognize the important accomplishments of Robert "Renny" Cushing, and I hope this Chamber will join me in celebrating his remarkable life and career.

HONORING JAMES W. FLINT

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2021

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor my friend and a champion of the LGBTQ+ community, James W. Flint, on his 80th birthday.

At just 17, Jim enlisted in the Navy. He quickly became an accomplished service member before returning home to Illinois. Since the early 1960s, Jim has been the lifeblood of Chicago's LGBTQ+ community, dedicating his time, resources, and talents to expanding and creating the LGBTQ+ nightlife scene. For over 60 years, Jim has been a trailblazer and inspiration to many across the state of Illinois and beyond, and has been a committed activist and business leader.

He started his career as a bartender and quickly became the entrepreneur we know and love by opening his first locale, the Baton Show Lounge, in downtown Chicago. It was a first of its kind drag bar, featuring drag queen entertainers before these kinds of shows became as popular as they are today. In the decades since, Jim has owned many fabulous establishments, including Annex 2, Annex 3, Redoubt, Redoubt Atlanta, and River North Travel, in addition to the Baton Show Lounge, which is still open today and was recently relocated to my very own 9th Congressional district.

In addition to his extraordinary bars, in 1980, Jim founded the Miss Gay Continental Pageant, a national level drag showcase. He was motivated to start the pageant when he learned that many other pageants were discriminating against drag performers we would today identify as transgender. At that time, many of the pageants created rules and barriers that excluded entertainers that were living as women or who had any kind of plastic surgery. Today, now known as the Miss Continental Pageant, it has expanded to a pageant system that celebrates male and female entertainers from all across the country and around the world, and occurs in Chicago annually.

He was also a co-founder of the Windy City Athletic Association, which gave LGBTQ+ Chicagoans the opportunity to compete in amateur athletics with their counterparts from all across the nation.

Jim's deep community roots quickly positioned him as an activist and community organizer. In 1986 he ran for the Cook County Board of Commissioners, and although his bid was not successful, it was groundbreaking as he was one of the first openly gay people to run for public office in Illinois.

As is the case for all trailblazers, Jim has faced and overcome significant challenges in his personal and professional life. From witnessing rampant domestic violence, drug abuse, and homicide within the LGBTQ community to the many lives we lost to the AIDS epidemic in Chicago and across the country, Jim has withstood phenomenal pain.

Throughout times of unthinkable tragedy, Jim's warm energy and generous spirit have never wavered. His drive, compassion, and fantastic flamboyance are remarkable and have allowed him to be incredibly successful. He has played a tremendous role in shaping the LGBTQ community around the country, and his impact on the City of Chicago is immeasurable. As a businessman in the LGBTQ and Chicago community, he has blazed trails and opened doors for so many others.

And as a public servant, activist and community leader, he has made sure that the needs of the LGBTQ community were not ignored by our government. I am honored to call Jim a friend and wish him all the best and continued success.

TRIBUTE TO YOUNG STAFF MEMBERS FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE OF THE 18TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF TEXAS AND THE UNITED STATES

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2021

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, in these tumultuous days of crisis and challenge, Members of Congress know well, perhaps better than most, how blessed our nation is to have in reserve such exceptional young men and women who will go on to become leaders in their local communities, states, and the nation in the areas of business, education, law, government, philanthropy, the arts and culture, and the military.

We know this because we see them and benefit from their contributions every day. Many of them work for us in our offices as junior staff members, congressional fellows, or interns and they do amazing work for and on behalf of the constituents we are privileged to represent.

Madam Speaker, I believe there is no higher calling than the call to serve a cause larger than ourselves. That is why I ran for public office. I was inspired to serve by President Kennedy who said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country," and by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who said:

"Everybody can be great because anybody can serve. . . . You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love."

By this measure, there are several other great young men and women who served as

volunteers this year in my offices. They braved the dangers of the pandemic that has wrought so much suffering and heartbreak across our nation. They cheerfully do their duty in the U.S. Capitol complex that just six months ago was the site of an insurrection attack not seen since the War of 1812. These dedicated and public-spirited men and women may toil in obscurity but their contributions to the constituents we serve are deeply appreciated. That is why today I rise to pay tribute to five extraordinary young persons for their service to my constituents in the 18th Congressional District of Texas and to the American people. They are:

Alejandro Garcia Escobar Plascencia, Georgetown University;

Jacqueline White Menchaca, Arizona State University;

Idia Irele, Smith College and Harvard University;

Anthony Collier, Texas Southern University; and

Valencia Shuler, Rice University.

Madam Speaker, the energy, intelligence, and idealism these wonderful young people brought to my office and those interning in the offices of my colleagues help keep our democracy vibrant. The insights, skills, and knowledge of the governmental process they gain from their experiences will last a lifetime and prove invaluable to them as they go about making their mark in this world.

Because of persons like them the future of our country is bright, and its best days lie ahead. I wish them all well.

Madam Speaker, I am grateful that such thoughtful committed young men and women can be found working in my office, those of my colleagues, and in every community in America. Their good works will keep America great, good, and forever young.